



**Roxann D. Wedegartner**  
Mayor

City of  
**GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**  

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**Department of Inspections and Enforcement**

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**INFORMATION GUIDE**  
**TO ERECT A TEMPORARY TENT AND MEMBRANE STRUCTURES**

Tents and membrane structures having an area in excess of 400 square feet shall not be erected, operated or maintained for any purpose without first obtaining a permit from the Building Code Official.

Exceptions:

1. Tents used exclusively for recreational camping purposes.
2. Tents open on all sides that comply with all of the following:
  - Individual tents having a maximum size of 700 square feet.
  - The aggregate area of multiple tents placed side by side without a fire break clearance of 12 feet, not exceeding 700 square feet total.
  - A minimum clearance of 12 feet to all structures and other tents.

To obtain a permit to erect or install a tent or membrane structure, first, an owner or authorized agent must first file a permit application on a form furnished by the Building Official for that purpose. Such application shall be provided with the following information,

- A detailed site and floor plan for tents or membrane structures with an occupant load of 50 or more shall be provided with each application for approval. The tent or membrane structure floor plan shall indicate details of the means of egress facilities, seating capacity, arrangement of seating and location and type of heating and electrical equipment.
- Use period: temporary tents, air-supported, air inflated or tensioned membrane structures shall not be erected for a period of more than 180 days within a 12 month period on a single premise.
- A certificate by an approved testing laboratory certifying tents and membrane structures and their appurtenances: sidewalls, drops, and tarpaulins; floor coverings, bunting and combustible decorative materials and effects, including sawdust where used on the floor or passageway meets the flame resistance or non-combustibility per NFPA 701.
  - ❖ Note; Membrane structures or tents shall have a permanently affixed label bearing the identification of size and fabric or material type,
- Certification; An affidavit or affirmation shall be provided attesting to all the following information relative to the flame propagation performance criteria of the fabric,
  - Name & address of the owners of the tent or air-supported structure.
  - Date the fabric was last treated with flame-retardant.
  - Trade name or kind of chemical used in treatment. Name of person or firm treating the material.
  - Name of testing agency and test standard by which the fabric was tested

3. Combustible materials, hay, straw, shavings, or similar combustible materials shall not be located within any tent or membrane structure containing an assembly occupancy. Except the materials necessary for the daily feeding and care of animals. Sawdust and shavings utilized for a public performance or exhibit shall not be prohibited provided the sawdust and shavings are kept damp. Combustible materials shall not be permitted under stands or seats at any time.
4. Tents or membrane structures and their appurtenances shall be adequately roped, braced, and anchored to withstand the elements of weather and prevent against collapsing. Documentation of structural stability shall be furnished to the Building official upon request.
5. Tents shall conform to the means of egress requirements of the Massachusetts State Building Code, 9th Edition (780 CMR), Chapter 10 and shall have a maximum exit access travel distance of 100 feet.
6. Exit openings from tents shall remain open unless covered by a flame-resistance curtain. The curtain shall comply with the following requirements;
  1. Curtains shall be free sliding on a metal support. The support shall not be less than 80 inches above the floor level at the exit. The curtains shall be so arranged that, when open, no part of the curtain obstructs the exit.
  2. Curtains shall be of a color, or colors, that contrast with the color of the tent.
7. All tents installed **by the same installer, for the same event, in the same general location** may go on the same application providing;
  - A single contact person will be required for multiple tents on a single application.
  - All information required by Building Code for each tent must be submitted with the application.
  - A plan showing the location of the tents and identifying the tents (in a way that corresponds with required documentation) must be submitted with the Building Permit Application.
  - The fee will be \$50 for the first tent and \$20 each additional tent (2-5 tents), \$15 each additional tent (6 + tents) on a multiple tent permit application at same location.
  - The fee for single tents will be \$50
8. The Signature Card must be on site at the time of Inspection.
  - ❖ Tents “ganged” together will be treated as a single tent for the purpose of area calculations, flame resistance & egress requirements. They will require extra stakes where they meet so that the tie downs are separated.

For more specific Building Code information see Chapter 31 of the Massachusetts State Building Code, 9th Edition (780 CMR) or 2015 International Fire Code (IFC)



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